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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 000470

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL MASS IT QA

SUBJECT: U.S. EMBASSY DOHA COUNTRY TEAM ASSESSMENT FOR APPROVAL TO TRANSFER TECHNICAL DATA AND SELL THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA TO QATARI ARMED FORCES VIA AGUSTA WESTLAND (ITALY).

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMB JOSEPH LEBARON, REASONS 1.4(A), (B), A ND (D).

1.(U) SUMMARY: AGUSTA-WESTLAND (ITALY) HAS RECEIVED A CONTRACT FOR THE STAR SAFIRE HD AIRBORNE SURVEILLANCE CAMERA SYSTEM FROM THE QATAR EMIRI AIR FORCE (QEAF) IN SUPPORT OF SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM MISSIONS FOR QATAR'S NEW AW139 HELICOPTERS. EMBASSY DOHA SUPPORTS RELEASE OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS SALE OF THE SYSTEM TO THE QATAR ARMED FORCES (QAF).

2.(U) THE FOLLOWING COUNTRY TEAM ASSESSMENT IS PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF THE QAF REQUEST.

3.(C) REASON QATAR DESIRES THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA: QATAR HAS CONTRACTED WITH AGUSTA-WESTLAND (ITALY) FOR FLIR SYSTEMS INCORPORATED TO PROVIDE TEN (10) STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERAS FOR THE EIGHTEEN (18) AW139 HELICOPTERS THAT AGUSTA-WESTLAND IS SELLING TO QATAR. THESE HELICOPTERS WILL BE TASKED WITH SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM MISSIONS FOR THE QEAF AND INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF).

4.(C) HOW THE ARTICLES OR SERVICES WOULD AFFECT QATAR'S FORCE STRUCTURE: THE NET BENEFIT FOR THE QATAR ARMED FORCES IS THE EXPANDED CAPABILITY TO EXECUTE SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM MISSIONS. CURRENTLY THEY HAVE TWO HELICOPTERS OPERATING WITH THE SAFIRE I SYSTEM.

5.(C) HOW THE ARTICLES OR SERVICES WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO BOTH U.S AND QATAR DEFENSE/SECURITY GOALS: AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD AIRBORNE SURVEILLANCE CAMERA SYSTEM WILL SUPPORT SEVERAL USG REGIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

-- DETER AND DEFEAT ADVERSARIES

-- ASSURE REGIONAL ACCESS

-- STRENGTHEN REGIONAL STABILITY

-- BUILD SELF-RELIANCE OF PARTNER NATION SECURITY FORCES

6.(C) PROTECT VITAL INTERESTS OF THE U.S. WITHIN THE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

ULTIMATELY, SALE OF THIS SYSTEM WILL HELP STRENGTHEN U.S. EFFORTS TO PROMOTE REGIONAL STABILITY BY ENHANCING REGIONAL DEFENSE TO A KEY U.S. ALLY. THE ACQUISITION OF THIS FLIR SYSTEM WOULD PROVIDE A LONG-TERM SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPABILITY CURRENTLY EXISTENT IN A MUCH SMALLER QUANTITY ON THE QATARI PENINSULA. SALES OF THIS WEAPON SYSTEM WILL ENHANCE A NASCENT U.S. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) PROGRAM. THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO FUTURE ACQUISITIONS OF INTEGRATABLE U.S. SYSTEMS THAT WILL ENHANCE REGIONAL SECURITY.

7.(C) JUSTIFICATION FOR THE TYPE AND QUANTITY OF ARTICLES OR SERVICES REQUESTED: QATAR SEEKS TO EXPAND THEIR SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPABILITIES. THE QAF HAS DETERMINED THAT TEN (10) STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEMS TO MOUNT ON THEIR AGUSTA 139AW HELICOPTERS ARE NEEDED TO SUPPORT QAF GOALS TO PROVIDE SEARCH AND RESCUE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPABILITIES.

8.(C) ANTICIPATED REACTIONS OF NEIGHBORING NATIONS: THE EXPECTATION IS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WILL HAVE NO PARTICULAR REACTION TO THE PURCHASE OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM AND NONE ARE EXPECTED TO RAISE OBJECTIONS. MANY OF QATAR'S NEIGHBORS ARE ACQUIRING OR HAVE ACQUIRED SIMILAR SYSTEMS.

9.(C) ASSESSMENT OF QATAR'S ABILITY TO ACCOUNT FOR, SAFEGUARD, OPERATE, MAINTAIN, AND SUPPORT THE ARTICLES: QAF HAS LIMITED CAPABILITY AND PRINCIPLES TO MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM. THEY DO HAVE TWO OPERATIONAL STAR SAFIRE I SYSTEMS. QAF UNDERSTANDS THE NEED AND CAPABILITY TO SAFEGUARD THE SYSTEMS. ALTHOUGH BASIC LEGISLATION EXISTS, QATAR'S POLICIES AND SYSTEMS FOR EXPORT CONTROL ARE LIMITED. THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND COMMERCE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING LEGISLATION FOR AND SUPERVISING THE NATION'S TRADE SYSTEM; HOWEVER, MEASURES GENERALLY DO NOT EXTEND BEYOND ECONOMICALLY FOCUSED AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AND GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL. THERE ARE NO USER SERVICABLE PARTS ON THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM. ALL PARTS ARE LINE REPLACEABLE UNITS (LRUS). THESE LRUS MUST BE SHIPPED TO FLIR SYSTEMS INCORPORATED DEPOT LOCATED IN THE UAE FOR REPAIR/REPLACEMENT.

10.(C) TRAINING REQUIRED EITHER IN-COUNTRY OR IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ANTICIPATED REACTIONS RESULTING FROM THE PRESENCE OF U.S. TRAINERS IN-COUNTRY: QAF PERSONNEL WILL REQUIRE LITTLE ADDITIONAL TRAINING AS THIS IS AN UPGRADE TO TECHNOLOGY ALREADY EXISTENT ON THEIR CURRENT HELICOPTERS. EDUCATIONAL COURSES AND TRAINING EXERCISES ARE ROUTINELY CONDUCTED BETWEEN QAF AND U.S. MILITARY. QATAR MAINTAINS A ROBUST U.S. MILITARY AND DEFENSE CONTRACTOR PRESENCE; NO ADVERSE REACTION TO U.S. TRAINERS IN QATAR IS ANTICIPATED.

11.(C) POSSIBLE IMPACT OF ANY IN-COUNTRY U.S. PRESENCE THAT MIGHT BE REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF PROVIDING THE ARTICLE: THERE WILL BE NO IMPACT IN-COUNTRY. IF QAF IS NOT ALLOWED TO PURCHASE THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM, IT WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INTEROPERABILITY WITH U.S. AND COALITION/REGIONAL FORCES, OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PORTFOLIO, AND FUTURE U.S. DEFENSE PRODUCT ACQUISITION.

12.(C) SOURCE OF FINANCING AND THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION: THE FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM WILL COME FROM THE QATARI NATIONAL BUDGET. QATAR APPEARS TO BE THE LEAST Affected COUNTRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND PERHAPS THE WORLD BY THE RECENT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN. THE UNITED STATES GAINS IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC BENEFIT BY SELLING THE DESIRED SYSTEM. APPROVAL AND EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING OF THIS REQUEST WILL LEAD TO FUTURE U.S. ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

13.(C) HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION: THERE ARE NO HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT THE PURCHASE OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM.

14.(C) A PLAN FOR END-USE MONITORING FOR SENSITIVE AND ADVANCED WARFIGHTING TECHNOLOGY AND THE SAO'S PLAN FOR COMPLIANCE VERIFICATION: QAF WILL REQUIRE EDUCATION ON END-USE MONITORING PROGRAM, AS APPLICABLE. QAF WILL COMPLY WITH END-USE MONITORING AS OUTLINED IN CHAPTER 8, DOD 5105-38-M, SECURITY ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT MANUAL, 3 OCTOBER 2003, AS NECESSARY. OMC QATAR WILL FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITY AND ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH END-USE MONITORING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE GOLDEN SENTRY PROGRAM BY CONDUCTING PERIODIC ACCOUNTABILITY INVENTORIES AND MONITORING OPERATIONAL USE AND CONTROL DURING DAY-TO-DAY

MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CONTACT, WHEN REQUIRED.

15.(C) RECOMMENDATION WHETHER THE USG SHOULD APPROVE TRANSFER OF THE CLASSIFIED DATA AND JUSTIFICATION: AMEMBASSY DOHA COUNTRY TEAM RECOMMENDS APPROVAL FOR THE SALE OF THE FLIR SYSTEMS INCORPORATED STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM TO QATAR. THIS ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN FULLY COORDINATED WITH AMEMBASSY DOHA COUNTRY TEAM.

16.(C) SALE OF THE STAR SAFIRE HD CAMERA SYSTEM IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH NATIONS ECONOMICALLY, MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY.

LeBaron